ATTORNEY'S DOCKET NO: 991304

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE		DATE: November 17, 1999
TRANSMITTAL LETTER TO THE UNITED STATES DESIGNATED/ELECTED OFFICE (DO/EO/US) CONCERNING A FILING UNDER 35 U.S.C. 371		U.S. APPLN. NO. (If known) 09/423981
INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO.: PCT/JP99/01302	INTERNATIONAL FILING DATE: March 17, 1999	PRIORITY DATE CLAIMED: March 18, 1998
TITLE OF INVENTION: ALUMINUM-ALLOY SLIDING MATERIAL		
APPLICANT(S) FOR DO/EO/US: Shogo MURAMATSU and Soo-Myung HONG		

Applicant hereby submits to the United States Designated/Elected Office (DO/EO/US) the following items and other information:

1. XX This is a **FIRST** submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. 371.

2. ___ This is a **SECOND** or **SUBSEQUENT** submission of items concerning a filing under 35 U.S.C. 371.

3. XX This express request to begin national examination procedures (35 USC 371(f)) at any time rather than delay examination until the expiration of the time limit set in 35 USC 371(b) and PCT Articles 22 and 39(1).

4. ___ A proper Demand for International Preliminary Examination was made by the 19th month from the earliest claimed priority date.

5. XX A copy of the International Application as filed (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(2)):

   a. ___ is transmitted herewith (required only if not transmitted by the International Bureau).
   b. XX has been transmitted by the International Bureau.
   c. ___ is not required, as the application was filed in the United States Receiving Office (RO/US)

6. XX A translation of the International Application into English (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(2)).

7. XX Amendments to the claims of the International Application under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(3))

   a. ___ are transmitted herewith (required only if not transmitted by the International Bureau).
   b. ___ have been transmitted by the International Bureau.
   c. ___ have not been made; however, the time limit for making such amendments has NOT expired.
   d. XX have not been made and will not be made.

8. ___ A translation of the amendments to the claims under PCT Article 19 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(3)).

9. ___ An oath or declaration of the inventor(s) (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(4)).

10. ___ A translation of the annexes to the International Preliminary Examination Report under PCT Article 36 (35 U.S.C. 371(c)(5)).

ITEMS 11. TO 16. BELOW CONCERN OTHER DOCUMENT(S) OR INFORMATION INCLUDED:

11. XX An Information Disclosure Statement under 37 CFR 1.97 and 1.98 together with the international search report and 2 references.

12. __ An assignment document for recording. A separate cover sheet in compliance with 37 CFR 3.28 and 3.31 is included.

13. XX A **FIRST** preliminary amendment.
    ___ A **SECOND** or **SUBSEQUENT** preliminary amendment

14. ___ A substitute specification.

15. ___ A change of power of attorney and/or address letter.

16. XX Other items or information: 1 sheet of drawings

ATTORNEY'S DOCKET NO: 991304

U.S. APPLICATION NO (if known)	INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO.	DATE:
09/423981	PCT/JP99/01302	November 17, 1999

17. X The following fees are submitted:	CALCULATIONS	PTO USE ONLY
Basic National Fee (37 CFR 1.492(a)(1)-(5): Search Report has been prepared by the EPO or JPO:.....$840.00		
International preliminary examination fee paid to USPTO (37 CFR 1.482).....$670.00		
No international preliminary examination fee paid to USPTO (37 CFR 1.482) but international search fee paid to USPTO (37 CFR 1.445(a)(2)).....$760.00		
Neither international preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) nor international search fee (37 CFR 1.445(a)(2)) paid to USPTO..... $970.00		
International preliminary examination fee (37 CFR 1.482) and all claims satisfied provisions of PCT Article 33(2)-(4).....$ 96.00		
ENTER APPROPRIATE BASIC FEE AMOUNT =	$ 840.00	
Surcharge of $130.00 for furnishing the oath or declaration later than ___ 20 X 30 months from the earliest claimed priority date (37 DVR 1.492(e)).	$ 130.00	

CLAIMS	NUMBER FILED	NUMBER EXTRA	RATE		
TOTAL	10 -20=		X $ 18.00		
INDEPENDENT	2 - 3=		X $ 78.00		
Multiple dependent claims(s) (if applicable)			+ $260.00	$ 260.00	
			TOTAL OF ABOVE CALCULATIONS =	$1,230.00	
Reduction by 1/2 for filing by small entity, if applicable. Verified Small Entity statement must also be filed. (Note 37 CFR 1.9, 1.27, 1.28).					
			SUBTOTAL =	$1,230.00	
Processing fee of $130.00 for furnishing the English translation later than ____ 20 ____ 30 months from the earliest claimed priority date (37 CFR 1.492(f)).			+		
			TOTAL NATIONAL FEE =	$1,230.00	
Fee for recording the enclosed assignment (37 CFR 1.21(h)). The assignment must be accompanied by an appropriate cover sheet (37 CFR 3.28, 3.31).			**$40.00 per property +**		
			TOTAL FEES ENCLOSED =	$1,230.00	
			Amount to be: refunded		$
			charged		$

514 Rec'd PCT/PTO 17 NOV 1999

ATTORNEY'S DOCKET NO: 991304

U.S. APPLICATION NO. (if known) 09/423981	INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION NO. PCT/JP99/01302	DATE: November 17, 1999

a. XX A check in the amount of $1,230.00 to cover the above fees is enclosed. (This paper is filed in triplicate)

b. ___ Please charge my Deposit Account No. 01-2340 in the amount of $_____ to cover the above fees. (A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.)

c. X The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

NOTE: Where an appropriate time limit under 37 CFR 1.494 or 1.495 has not been met, a petition to revive (37 CFR 1.137(a) or (b)) must be filed to request that the application be restored to pending status.

Send All Correspondence To:

ARMSTRONG, WESTERMAN, HATTORI
McLELAND & NAUGHTON
1725 K Street, N.W. Suite 1000
Washington, D.C. 20006
(202) 659-2930

SIGNATURE

Le-Nhung McLeland
NAME

31,541
REGISTRATION NUMBER

LNM/yap

PATENT

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re application of: **Shogo MURAMATSU et al.**

Serial Number: **Not Yet Assigned**

Filed: **November 17, 1999**

For: **ALUMINUM-ALLOY BASED SLIDING MATERIAL**

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

November 17, 1999

Sir:

Prior to the calculation of the filing fees of the above application, please amend the application as follows:

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Page 2, line 29, delete "20" and substitute therefor --12--;

line 32, delete "20" and substitute therefor --12--.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claim 4, lines 1 and 2, delete "any one of claims 1 through 3" and substitute therefor --claim 1 or 2--.

Claim 5, lines 1 and 2, delete "any one of claims 1 through 4" and substitute therefor --claim 1 or 2--.

REMARKS

Page 2 of the specification has been amended to recite the same range as recited in claim 1.

The above amendment is also believed to correct improper multiple dependency of the claims and place the claims in better condition for examination. Early and favorable action is awaited.

In the event there are any additional fees required, please charge our Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

ARMSTRONG, WESTERMAN, HATTORI,
McLELAND & NAUGHTON

Le-Nhung McLeland
Reg.No. 31,541

Atty. Docket No. 991304
Suite 1000
1725 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006
Tel: (202) 659-2930
LNM/yap

DESCRIPTION

Aluminum-Alloy Based Sliding Material

Technical Field

The present invention is related to aluminum-alloy having improved sliding properties. More particularly, the sliding properties of aluminum alloy according to the present invention are enhanced by utilizing the flame-spraying technique.

Background Technique

The following are known aluminum-alloy based sliding materials required to have such properties as wear-resistance and seizure-resistance.

(a) An Al-Si based melted alloy (Alusil alloy). The wear-resistance due to the eutectic Si or primary Si is utilized. The Si content in this alloy is generally from 3 to 18%. Forging, casting and the like work this alloy into the material shape.

(b) In the process of working the aluminum alloy into a rolled sheet and heat-treating the same, such hard particles as Si particles and Fe particles are nodularized (German Patent No. 3249133 of the present applicant). Improved seizure resistance and the like are attained by breaking-in of an opposed shaft by the nodular Si and the like of this alloy.

(c) A small amount of Cr is added to an Al-Sn based alloy to prevent coarsening of the Sn phase, hence enhancing the fatigue resistance of Al alloy (United States Patent No. 4153756 assigned to the present applicant)

(d) Powder-metallurgy alloy utilizing the melt-quenched powder (for example Japanese Patent Publication No. 2535789). In this publication, aluminum-alloy melt containing from 15 to 30 wt% of Si is quenched and solidified as powder. The resultant powder is hot-pressed and then hot-extruded. As a result, sliding material having improved properties, such as wear-resistance, mechanical strength, light-weight property, and low expansion-coefficient, is produced.

Since Pb, which is contained in many cases in the copper alloys, such as kelmet, i.e., a principal sliding material other than aluminum alloy, is an environment-pollution material, it is predicted in future

situations that the use of copper alloys may be restricted.

A technique of flame-spraying the Cu-alloy sliding-material is known. It is shown in International Publication WO95/25224 filed by the present applicant. "Tribologist" Vol. 41, No.11 (1996), pages 19 – 24 (in Japanese) generally illustrates how to apply the flame-spraying technique to the production of sliding material. However, regarding the flame-spraying of aluminum-based alloy, only pure Al is mentioned.

The alloys of (a) – (c) mentioned above are difficult to cast and are more difficult to form, such as by forging, when the Si content exceeds 20%. The wear resistance of these alloys is, therefore, limited by the Si amount. A large amount of Si can be contained in the alloy (d). Such forming methods as hot-pressing and hot-extrusion are, however, necessarily employed. It is, therefore, practically impossible to use (d) for a hemi-spherical bearing which will be used for the main bearing (usually referred to as "metal") of an internal combustion engine.

The present inventors therefore, conducted research with the aim that: the Al-Si based aluminum alloys in a eutectic region or a hyper-eutectic region would be formed into various shapes of the sliding parts by means of a simple method; and, considerably improved properties than those of the conventional melted material would be demonstrated.

Disclosure of Invention

The present inventors energetically carried out experiments and discovered that: the flame-sprayed Al-Si based aluminum alloys in a eutectic region or a hyper-eutectic region exhibit improved adhesiveness with a substrate; and, the Si particles are refined. The present invention was thus completed.

The present first invention is a flame-sprayed aluminum-alloy, which contains from 20 to 60% by weight of Si, the balance being essentially Al, and further, the granular Si particles are dispersed in the matrix thereof. The present second invention is a flame-sprayed aluminum-alloy, which contains from 20 to 60% by weight of Si, from 0.1 to 30% by weight of Sn, the balance being essentially Al, and further the granular Si particles and Sn are dispersed in the matrix thereof.

The flame-spraying is based on the definition of Glossary

The flame-spraying is based on the definition of Glossary Dictionary of JIS Industrial Terms, 4 th edition, page 1946 (spraying) and indicates that "material is converted to molten or half-molten state by a heat source and is blown onto a substrate to form a film." More specifically, the "material" is aluminum-alloy or its raw material, for example Al powder and Si powder. The half-molten state indicates that such a solid-liquid coexistent state as is realized in a high-Si Al alloy having a high melting-point. Alternatively, the half-molten state indicates that a portion of the powder does not melt, as is explained hereinbelow.

The present invention is explained in detail hereinafter. The percentage is weight % unless otherwise specified.

EP 0713972A1 filed by the present applicant along with the other applicant provides a detailed explanation of the flame-sprayed copper alloy by referring to an example of Cu-Pb alloy. The rapid cooling and solidification of molten particles is common in the Al-alloy example. One of the features of the flame-sprayed Al-Si alloy is that an additive element (Si) has a higher melting point than that of the matrix element (Al). As a result, Si in the granular form is finely dispersed in the aluminum matrix in a large amount. Thus, Si enhances the hardness and hence wear-resistance of the alloy. This is an effect obtained in the Al-Si based alloy according to the present first invention.

In the present invention, the granular Si particles do not have the same shape as seen in the primary Si of the conventional melted alloy or the Si particles of the rolled alloy. They have a one-directional, lengthwise property. Rather the granular Si particles of the present invention have spheroidal, nodular, polygonal or an irregular shapes, not classified as the former three shapes, and have almost the same dimension in any direction. Furthermore, a noticeable distinction between the primary Si and eutectic Si seen in the conventional melted alloys disappear in the case of the present invention. The granular Si particles may be the same as the nodular particles of the German patent referred to above, but are generally more rounded than the nodular particles. The rounded shape can be expressed quantitatively in terms of the short-diameter/long-diameter. The granular Si of the present invention has a ratio of generally 1/3 or more.

The large amount of finely dispersed granular Si particles suppresses seizure due to adhesion of the aluminum matrix with the opposite shaft.

The hardness of the flame-sprayed alloy is in a range of from Hv100 to 600. Since the hardness of the conventional 12% Si-containing alloy is Hv70 to 150, the flame-sprayed layer according to the present invention can be said to be very hard.

The composition of the aluminum-alloy according to the present invention is hereinafter explained.

When the Si content of the aluminum-alloy according to the present invention is less than 12%, the enhancement effects of wear resistance and seizure resistance are slight. On the other hand, when the Si content exceeds 60%, the strength so drastically lowers as to impair wear resistance. A preferable Si content is from 15 to 50%. When the size of Si particles exceeds 50 μ m, the separation of Si particles is liable to occur. A preferable size is from 1 to 40 μ m.

Next, the Al-Si-Sn based alloy of the present second invention exhibits improved seizure-resistance and wear-resistance as required in wear-resistant and seizure-resistant parts, such as the metal, bush, for which Al-Sn alloy has been heretofore used. The shape and content of Si as in the description of the first invention is common. Sn is a component for imparting the lubricating property and compatibility. Sn disperses uniformly in the aluminum matrix. In addition, Sn preferentially adheres to the opposed shaft. Sn therefore impedes the sliding of materials of the same kind, i.e., Al adhering to the opposed shaft and Al of the bearing, with the result that the seizure resistance is enhanced. When the Sn content is less than 0.1%, it is not effective in enhancing the lubricating property and the like. On the other hand, when the Sn content exceeds 30%, the strength of alloy is lowered. A preferable Sn content is from 5 to 25%. Ultra-fine particles of submicrons among the Si particles, present in the inventive alloy in a large amount, seem to be present in the extreme vicinity of Sn and to suppress its coarsening, thereby enhancing the fatigue resistance.

The aluminum alloy according to the present first and second invention can contain the following optional elements.

Cu: Cu is solid-dissolved in the aluminum matrix at super-

saturation and thus enhances its strength. Cu thus suppresses adhesive wear of aluminum and wear due to separation of Si particles. In addition, a part of Cu forms with Sn, a Sn-Cu intermetallic compound and hence enhances the wear-resistance. However, when the Cu content exceeds 7.0%, the alloy is hardened too much to provide appropriate sliding material. A preferable Cu content is from 0.5 to 5%.

Mg: Mg is combined with a part of Si and forms a Mg-Si intermetallic compound. Mg, thus, enhances the wear resistance. However, when the Mg content exceeds 5.0%, coarse Mg phase formed impairs the sliding properties.

Mn: Mn is solid-dissolved in the aluminum matrix at super-saturation and thus enhances its strength. The effects attained by Mn are the same as those by Cu. However, when the Mn content exceeds 1.5%, the alloy is hardened too much to provide appropriate sliding material. A preferable Mn content is from 0.1 to 1%.

Fe: Fe is solid-dissolved in the aluminum matrix at super-saturation and thus enhances its strength. The effects attained by Fe are the same as those by Cu. However, when the Fe content exceeds 1.5%, the alloy is hardened too much to provide appropriate sliding material. A preferable Fe content is from 0.1 to 1%.

Ni: Ni is solid-dissolved in the aluminum matrix at super-saturation and thus enhances its strength. The effects attained by Ni are the same as those by Cu. However, when the Ni content exceeds 8%, the alloy is too hardened to provide appropriate sliding material. A preferable Ni content is from 0.1 to 5%.

Subsequently, the characteristics of the flame-sprayed alloy are described.

In the present invention, various flame-spraying methods listed in Fig.2 of Tribologist, ibid. page 20, Fig. 2 can be employed. Among them, high-velocity oxyfuel flame-spraying method (HVOF, high velocity oxyfuel) can be preferably employed. It seems that the characterizing morphology of Si particles can be obtained by this method, since it has features described on page 20, right column, lines 4 through 13 of Tribologist, ibid. Flame-sprayed Al is so rapidly cooled and solidified that a large amount of Si is solid-dissolved to harden Al. It has, therefore, a feature of holding the Si particles at high strength.

Separation of Si particles and the wear due to such separation can, therefore, be suppressed. Atomized powder of alloys such as Al-Si alloy, Al-Si-Sn alloy and the like can be used as the flame-spraying powder. These atomized powders may be completely melted on the substrate and then solidified. Alternatively, a partly unmelted atomized powder may be applied on the substrate, so that the unmelted structure of powder remains.

The flame-spraying conditions are preferably: from 0.45 to 0.76 MPa of the oxygen pressure; from 0.45 to 0.76 MPa of fuel pressure; and from 50 to 250 mm of flame-spraying distance. A preferable thickness for the flame-sprayed layer is from 10 to 500 μ m, particularly from 10 to 300 μ m.

Various metal substrates, such as iron, copper, aluminum and the like can be used as the substrate to form a flame-sprayed alloy thereon. A substrate may have any shape, such as sheet, round disc, tube and the like. When the surface of a substrate is roughened by means of shot-blasting and the like, to preferably Rz 10 to 60 μ m of surface roughness, then the adhesive strength of a film can be increased. More specifically, the measurement of adhesive strength of a film by a shear-fracture testing method revealed that: adhesive strength of flame-sprayed Ni film on the shot-blasted steel substrate was 30 to 50 MPa; while the adhesive strength of the film according to the present invention was 40 to 60 MPa. This is higher than that of the flame-sprayed Ni film, which has been heretofore reputed to have good adhesiveness.

Heat treatment can be applied to the flame-sprayed alloy to adjust the hardness.

In the case of using the flame-sprayed alloy without application of an overlay, the flame-sprayed surface is preferably finished to Rz 3.2 μ m or less. In the case of using the overlay, various soft coatings exhibit excellent compatibility, such as Sn, Pb-Sn, MoS_2, and MoS_2-graphite-based coating, so as to enhance the seizure-resistance.

The present invention is described by way of the examples.

Brief Explanation of Drawing

Fig. 1 is a photograph showing the microscope structure of the flame-sprayed aluminum-alloy according to Example 1.

Best Mode for Carrying out Invention

Example 1

Mixture of metal powder was prepared to provide the compositions shown in Table 1. Meanwhile commercially available pure-aluminum rolled sheets were subjected to the shot-blasting by steel grids (0.7 mm of size) to roughen the surface to Rz 45 μ m.

Using a HVOF type flame-spraying machine (DJ, product of Sulzer Meteco Co., Ltd.) the flame spraying was carried out under the following conditions.

Oxygen pressure: 150 psi

Fuel pressure: 100 psi

Flame-spraying distance: 180 mm

Thickness of flame-sprayed layer: 200 μ m

The resultant flame-sprayed layer had a hardness of Hv= 180 – 250, and an average size of granular Si partilcles of 3 μ m. The surface of the flame-sprayed layer was finished to Rz 1.2 μ m. The wear test was then carried out under the following conditions, with a steel shaft (hardened SUJ2, 15 mm of diameter) being used as the opposed shaft. The wear test was carried out under the following conditions.

Testing machine: three-pin/disc friction wear testing machine

Load: 40kg/cm^2

Number of revolution: 700 rpm

Lubrication: naphthene-based oil

Testing time: 120 minutes

The results are shown in following Table 1

Table 1

Composition of Flame-sprayed Aluminum-Alloys (wt%) and Wear Amount (μ m) of Examples

Number	Al	Si	Sn	Cu	Mg	Mn	Fe	Ni	Wear Amount
1	Bal	40	—	—	—	—	—	—	3
2	Bal	35	10	—	—	—	—	—	2
3	Bal	49	—	2.8	0.7	0.5	0.7	—	1
4	Bal	21.7	30	4.3	—	—	—	2.2	2

Comparative Example 1

The flame-sprayed layer of pure aluminum was formed under the same conditions as in Example 1. The same wear test was carried out.

Comparative Example 2

Al-Si alloy containing 17% of Si, exhibits almost maximum wear resistance among the cast alloys. Such 17% Si-containing Al alloy was cast in a sand mold to prepare a test specimen. This was tested as in Example 1. The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Composition of Flame-sprayed Aluminum-Alloys (wt%) and Wear Amount (μ m) of Comparative Examples

Number	Al	Si	Sn	Cu	Mg	Mn	Fe	Ni	Wear Amount
1*	100	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	50
2+	Bal	17	—	—	—	—	—	—	4

Remarks:1*-flame-sprayed material, 2+-cast material

Example 2

The flame-sprayed alminum alloy number 1 in Example 1, as well as this alloy with a 10 to 20 μ m thick coating of MoS_2 + polyamide-imide resin and a Sn-plating coating, were subjected to a test for seizure resistance. The method for testing seizure resistance was as follows.

Testing machine: three-pin/disc friction wear testing machine

Load: successive increasing of load

Number of revolution: 700 rpm

Lubrication: naphthene-based oil

The following seizure load was obtained as a result of the test.

No soft coating: seizure at 80kg/cm^2

Coating of MoS_2 + polyamide-imide resin: more than 150kg/cm^2

Sn-plating coating: more than 150kg/cm^2

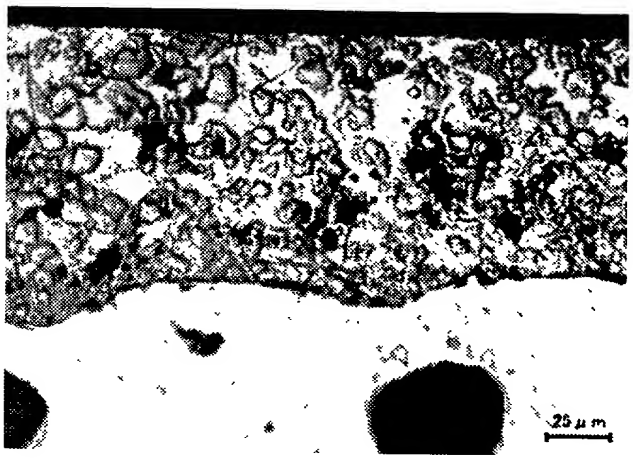
Industrial Applicability

As is described hereinabove, the hyper-eutectic Al-Si alloy can be shaped into various sliding parts, such as a shoe and a metal. In addition, the performances of the inventive alloy is superior to that of the conventional melted Al-Si alloy. The present invention therefore greatly contributes to the development of sliding parts.

CLAIMS

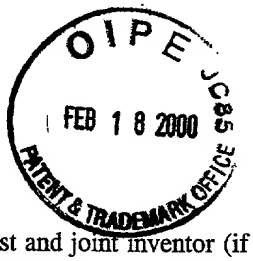
1. A flame-sprayed aluminum-alloy particularly suited as sliding material, wherein the aluminum alloy contains from 12 to 60% by weight of Si, the balance being essentially Al, and further the granular Si particles are dispersed in the matrix thereof.
2. A flame-sprayed aluminum-alloy, which contains from 12 to 60% by weight of Si, from 0.1 to 30% by weight of Sn, the balance being essentially Al, and further the granular Si particles and Sn being dispersed in the matrix thereof.
3. A flame-sprayed aluminum alloy according to claim 1 or 2, wherein said alloy contains at least one element of the group consisting of: 7.0% by weight or less of Cu; 5.0% by weight or less of Mg; 1.5% by weight or less of Mn; 1.5% by weight or less of Fe; and 8.0% by weight or less of Ni.
4. A flame-sprayed aluminum alloy according to any one of claims 1 through 3, wherein the average particle diameter of said granular Si is 50 μ m or less.
5. A flame-sprayed aluminum alloy according to any one of claims 1 through 4, wherein said alloy is applied on a metallic substrate having roughened surface.
6. A flame-sprayed aluminum alloy according to claim 5, wherein a soft film is applied on said flame-sprayed aluminum alloy.

Fig. 1



Docket No. _____ ARMSTRONG, WESTERMAN, HATTORI, McLELAND & NAUGHTON

Declaration for U.S. Patent Application



As a below named inventor, I hereby declare that:

My residence, post office address and citizenship are as stated below next to my name.

I believe I am the original, first and sole inventor (if only one name is listed below) or an original, first and joint inventor (if plural names are listed below) of the subject matter which is claimed and for which a patent is sought on the invention **entitled**
(Insert Title) Aluminum-Alloy Based Sliding Material

the specification of which is attached hereto unless the following is checked

☐ was filed on March 17, 1999 as ~~United States Application Number~~ or PCT International Application Number PCT/JP99/01302 and was amended on April 20, 1999 (if applicable).

I hereby state that I have reviewed and understand the contents of the above-identified specification, including the claim(s), as amended by any amendment referred to above.

I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, § 1.56.

I hereby claim foreign priority benefits under Title 35, United States Code, § 119 (a) - (d) of any foreign application(s) for patent or inventor's certificate listed below and have also identified below any foreign application for patent or inventor's certificate having a filing date before that of the application for which priority is claimed:

				Priority Claimed
(List prior foreign applications. See note A on back of this page)	10-68951 (Number)	Japan (Country)	03/18/1998 (Day/Month/Year Filed)	x Yes ___ No
	___ (Number)	___ (Country)	___ (Day/Month/Year Filed)	___ Yes ___ No
	___ (Number)	___ (Country)	___ (Day/Month/Year Filed)	___ Yes ___ No
	___ (Number)	___ (Country)	___ (Day/Month/Year Filed)	___ Yes ___ No

(See note B on back of this page) __ See attached list for additional prior foreign applications

I hereby claim the benefit under Title 35, United States Code, § 120 of any United States application(s) listed below and, insofar as the subject matter of each of the claims of this application is not disclosed in the prior United States application in the manner provided by the first paragraph of Title 35, United States Code, § 112, I acknowledge the duty to disclose information which is material to patentability as defined in Title 37, Code of Federal Regulations, § 1.56 which became available between the filing date of the prior application and the national or PCT international filing date of this application.

(List Prior U.S. Applications)	___ (Appln. Serial No.)	___ (Filing Date)	___ (Status: Patented, Pending, Abandoned)
	___ (Appln. Serial No.)	___ (Filing Date)	___ (Status: Patented, Pending, Abandoned)
	___ (Appln. Serial No.)	___ (Filing Date)	___ (Status: Patented, Pending, Abandoned)

I hereby appoint the following attorney(s) and/or agent(s) to prosecute this application and to transact all business in the Patent and Trademark Office connected therewith:

James E. Armstrong, III, Reg. No. 18,366; William F. Westerman, Reg. No. 29,988; Ken-Ichi Hattori, Reg. No. 32,861; Le-Nhung McLeland, Reg. No. 31,541; Ronald F. Naughton, Reg. No. 24,616; William G. Kratz, Jr., Reg. No. 22,631; Mel R. Quintos, Reg. No. 31,898; Donald W. Hanson, Reg. No. 27,133; Stephen G. Adrian, Reg. No. 32,878; Scott M. Daniels, Reg. No. 32,562; James P. Welch, Reg. No. 17,379; John

R. Pegan, Reg. No. 18,069; John F. Carney, Reg. No. 20,276; Edward F. Welsh, Reg. No. 22,455; William L. Brooks, Reg. No. 34,129; John P. Kong, Reg. No. 40,054; Luke A. Kilyk, Reg. No. 33,251; James E. Armstrong, IV, Reg. No. 42,266; Nicholas E. Seckel, Reg. No. P-44,373; Leonard D. Bowersox, Reg. No. 33,226; Raymond J. Ho, Reg. No. 41,838; Thomas E. Brown, Reg. No. P-44,450; and James N. Baker, Reg. No. 40,899.

Please direct all communications to the following address:

ARMSTRONG, WESTERMAN, HATTORI,
McLELAND & NAUGHTON
1725 K Street, N.W., Suite 1000
Washington, D.C. 20006
Telephone: (202) 659-2930 Fax: (202) 887-0357

I hereby declare that all statements made herein of my own knowledge are true and that all statements made on information and belief are believed to be true; and further that these statements were made with the knowledge that willful false statements and the like so made are punishable by fine or imprisonment, or both, under Title 18 of the United States Code, § 1001 and that such willful false statements may jeopardize the validity of the application or any patent issued thereon.

(See note C above)

1-00 Full name of sole or first inventor (given name, family name) Shogo Muramatsu, Syogo Muramatsu as typed on PCT Request

Inventor's signature v Shogo Muramatsu √ Date February 10, 2000

Residence Aichi, Japan JPX Citizenship Japanese

Post Office Address c/o TAIHO KOGYO CO., LTD., 65, Midorigaoka 3-chome, Toyota-shi, AICHI 471-8502 JAPAN

2-00 Full name of second inventor (given name, family name) Soo-Myung Hong, Soo-Myung Hon as typed on PCT Request

Inventor's signature v Soo-Myung Hong √ Date February 10, 2000

Residence Aichi, Japan JPX Citizenship Korean

Post Office Address c/o TAIHO KOGYO CO., LTD., 65, Midorigaoka 3-chome, Toyota-shi, AICHI 471-8502 JAPAN

Full name of third inventor (given name, family name) _____

Inventor's signature _____ Date _____

Residence _____ Citizenship _____

Post Office Address _____

Full name of fourth inventor (given name, family name) _____

Inventor's signature _____ Date _____

Residence _____ Citizenship _____

Post Office Address _____

Full name of fifth inventor (given name, family name) _____

Inventor's signature _____ Date _____

Residence _____ Citizenship _____

Post Office Address _____

Full name of sixth inventor (given name, family name) _____

Inventor's signature _____ Date _____

Residence _____ Citizenship _____

Post Office Address _____

Full name of seventh inventor (given name, family name) _____

Inventor's signature _____ Date _____

Residence _____ Citizenship _____

Post Office Address _____

Full name of eighth inventor (given name, family name) _____

Inventor's signature _____ Date _____

Residence _____ Citizenship _____

Post Office Address _____

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